PICTURES OF THE PATRIARCHS

Wm PRESTON JOHNSTON.

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To
Dr Allen S. McIntosh
With the kind regards
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PICTURES OF THE PATRIARCHS

AND

OTHER POEMS

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WILLIAM PRESTON JOHNSTON.

NEW ORLEANS:
F. F. HANSELL & BRO., PUBLISHERS,
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OTHER POEMS.

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BY WILLIAM PRESTON JOHNSTON.

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TO

MRS. JOSEPHINE LOUISE NEWCOMB

THIS LITTLE BOOK

OF VERSE

IS

DEDICATED

AS

THE MEMORIAL

OF

AN ANCIENT FRIENDSHIP

AND

OF HER BENEFICENCE AND WISDOM

SHOWN IN GIFTS FOR THE

HIGHER EDUCATION

OF

THE WOMEN OF NEW ORLEANS.

SONNET.

TO MRS. JOSEPHINE L. NEWCOMB.

Them that the Lord reserves for goodly deeds,
He tempers in affliction's furnace fires,
And treats as dross their sorest human needs,
Burning to ashes all their vain desires.
Quenching in tears the hot soul that aspires,
He on the anvil lays the throbbing heart
And smites it; this its stubborn grain requires
To fashion it for use; the thrill, the smart,
The shaping blow reveal the Maker's art.
From flame, from force, from flood, His hand withdraws
Th' elastic steel to do a worthy part,
And in a seraph's hand to serve the Master's cause,
Supple and strong as the Damascus blade,
For God's best uses and His warfare made.

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PART FIRST.

PICTURES OF THE PATRIARCHS.

"I will open my mouth in a parable:
I will utter dark sayings of old;
Which we have heard and known,
And which our fathers have told us."

Psalm LXXVIII, 2, 3.

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM.

The dull gray dawn came creeping o'er a waste,
Wide-stretching, level and monotonous,
Without a tree or shrub, without a stream,
With no glad sound of water, no soft swell
Of leafy waves in forest, or in grove,
Save one tall palm beside a sunken well,
Whose polished rim with toil and time was worn
—Abrasions by the rope through centuries—
One straight plumed palm whose crest sighed in the wind.
From a low hillock nigh, a shapen rock,
Sculptured by Nature, through the gravel broke;
Such altar rude as Titans might uprear
To Chaos. On its summit huddled lay
A heap, black in the stirring breath of dawn.
There came a flushing in th' awakened East,
A radiant finger toward the zenith stretched
Through the dark sky, as if to point a path
Of royal splendor for the king of day.
Then all grew luminous; and, from the rock,
What seemed a pile inanimate rose up
A man in shepherd's garb, tall, powerful,
Straight as the spear he bore in his right hand,
And stood as motionless as if out the rock,
By light's creative touch evoked he had sprung
And the same instant had been turned to stone.
His eyes were toward the Orient, whose bright gates,
On golden hinges turning, showed the dawn,
Angelic sentinel, whose mailéd hand

Unbarred the portals of the shining East.
Hope, like a diadem, sat on his brow,
And in his gaze beamed forth full-hearted joy,
Love, expectation, reverence and faith.

And now the glories of the coming day
Draw on apace, pearl, opal, amber, rose,
Peach-bloom, pomegranate, breath of flame, the core
Of altar-fire, and all the auguries,
The heralds, nymphs, companions of the Sun;
'Till the great orb, in awful majesty,
Bursts from the dull, dead level of the plain.
"Now I know God!" the shepherd cried aloud,
And bent his knee and worshipped: "This is God.
'Tis Thou who givest heat, light, life and growth
To herb and tree, to the dull beast who feeds
And knows Thee not and unto me who claim
Kinship to Thee and aspirations high
And life immortal in these throbbing veins.
O mighty ruler of the spreading earth!
O guardian who hast called day from the night!
Conqueror of darkness and the world of death!
I give Thee praise for that I know I am,
For what I am not; I beseech Thee, watch
With Thine unblenching eye over the man
Who worships Thee!"

Tending his patient flock
And drawing water to assuage their thirst,
Or threatening with his lance the prowling wolf,
He did his task, 'till, wearied with the toil,
He broke his fast with bread stored in his scrip
And the pure water and a draught of milk.
His hunger satisfied, beneath the palm,
Or stretched in sheltered shadows of the rock,
He wore away the lingering afternoon,

Until the gradual Sun sloped to the west
And o'er him threw her evening dusky pall.
"What meaneth this?" the musing shepherd cried;
"Can a God sleep or lay him down to rest,
Outwearied with his ward, while, clean forgot,
I and the world are left the sport of chance
Or to the care of lesser deities."

E'en as he spoke, out of the fading sky
Looked forth an eye bright with intelligence,
The Evening Star, which seemed to read his thoughts;
And from the ebon portals of the East,
Robed all in sheen of silver, like a queen
New-wedded, came the Moon; while, drawing near,
As virgins bidden to a marriage feast,
Thronged all the company of stars in heaven.
"They tell—those old Sabæans,"—thus he spoke,
"That these are they that rule the fates of men,
Decide their destinies, and sway their lives
With happy or with baleful influence.
Be these my bright divinities, whose eyes
With observation multitudinous
Shall guard my rest."

Throughout the night he kept
An equal vigil with the untiring stars
And with the imperial moon that moved supreme
Athwart mid-heaven. But when she too had set,
The shining watchers trembled and turned pale,
And sank into the luminous arms of morn.
With eyes fast fixed upon the awful vault,
Which overhangs the solid ribs of earth,
The shepherd murmured: "Fade ye, too, ye hosts?
Burns there no quenchless flame, no source of light,
Which self-subsisting still pervades the void
Of universal space, and guides the star,

Revolves the moon, and plants His flaming torch
On the bright chariot of the king of day?
Shines there no Central Light which sees, knows, rules?
Is there no Being in whom rests the All?
Yes! One, a Spirit, invisible, supreme,
To whom sun, moon and stars, the world itself,
Are ministers, whose hand shall guide their course
And their appointed times and seasons set,
Whose days are numberless, without end or time,
And in whose breath stands all the state of man.
Him will I worship, Him alone adore,
The God more ancient than the lights of heaven,
Who was, and is, and shall forever be;
Eternal, infinite, and knowing all,
Him will I serve; in Him alone believe;
Live for Him, love Him, lie in His right hand."

Then rolled the thunder in the cloudless sky,
Sharp flashed the lightning and the great earth shook,
While from a space where dazzling radiance blazed,
Blinding the man with soul-subduing awe,
Came forth a voice which pierced him like a sword,
Yet poured a balm upon the wound it made.
"Fear not," it said, "thy shield and buckler I,
And thine own great reward, thou friend of God.
Abram, seeing thy faith, henceforth art thou
Father of the faithful; thus my call to thee.
Thou art the stem, whose branches wide shall spread
To every land; thy seed more numberless
Than forest leaves, than sands upon the shore,
Than all the stars on which thine eyes have gazed,
Shall rule the world; and in them shall be blessed
All generations. This thy covenant
And thine exceeding great reward shall be."

ABRAHAM'S GUEST.

Abraham, friend of God and father of all
Who hold the primal creed that God is One,
Was sitting where his horsehair tent was stretched
Under the foliage of the tamarisk.
About his knees the child of laughter played,
The heir of promise, blessed before his birth.
Beyond strode Ishmael, with sullen brow
And air imperious and chiding voice,
Hast'ning the herdsmen, who had given scant heed
To the black clouds that lowered in the North.
The patriarch's eye fell on the gathering flocks,
The swaying camels and the huddling sheep,
Asses and kine, and the dust whirls that marked
Their homeward coming, and beyond them gazed
At the low sun betwixt the gilded bars
Of cloud; when, right across the disk, appeared,
Blurring it, as from a red furnace-door,
The form of one low-bent, as if with age,
Suppliant and worn, with vesture travel-stained.

Abraham rose—a chief of many bands—
And, stretching forth his hand with courtesy,
Made the poor wanderer welcome. "Enter thou,"
He said, "my dwelling; make its shelter glad
And honored with thy presence." Seating him,
The chief stooped down, and loosed his sandal's cord
And bathed his bruiséd feet.

Meanwhile the hands
Of Sarah had prepared the evening meal,
Butter and milk with seethéd lamb and bread,
And set the fare before the aged man.
The stranger-guest, with eager appetite,
Began to eat, giving no thanks to God.
The patriarch marked with anger the neglect,
And thus he spake, "Adorest thou not God,
Who plucked thee safely from the coming storm,
The Giver, who through me, hath spread this board?"
"And who is he?" the stranger made reply,
"That I should thank him for thy goodly gifts?
When I adore, let it be sacred fire,
That warms the sluggish blood, that fills the eye
And thrills the heart with color, heat and light."
Then Abraham, with holy zeal consumed,
With love of God and hatred of His foes,
Thrust forth his guest into the night and storm,
Saying, with bitterness of righteous wrath,
"Get hence, Idolater!"

The tempest beat
At his tent door with fitful violence;
Fast fell the driving hail; and the keen wind,
With the Accuser's voice, howled mockingly.
Abraham stood, the blood still crimsoning
His clouded brow, when on his heart there fell
The awe of one who hears the voice of God,
The Voice that called him from Chaldea forth
And gave the Land to him and to his seed
As an inheritance. Yet on the blast
It spake not, for a solemn lull had fallen
On earth and heaven; but in his heart the words
He heard, like footfalls of the thunder king
In some vast cavern's darkness echoing.
"Where is the aged man, thine evening guest?"

And Abraham replied: "I thrust him forth,
O Lord! because he would not worship Thee."
Then God made answer: "Have I borne with him
These hundred years, although dishonoring Me,
And thou—could'st thou not suffer him one night?"
Then to the earth the Patriarch bowed down,
"Alas! my zeal was blind; Thy pardon, Lord!"
And forth into the storm he went, and fetched
The stranger back, and seated him again
With greater reverence than before, and cast
His scarlet robe, sign of his chieftainship,
Around his shivering form, and gently said,
"The Lord, my God, the Ever Merciful,
Hath bidden me care for thee." The stranger spake:
"Many have been my years of pilgrimage,
Many, evil and weary have they been,
And never yet till now hath mortal man
To me, for evil speech, requited good.
They tell that somewhere dwells a Light Divine,
Which warms the heart with vision of the truth
That God is merciful. O Abraham!
A hundred years of penury and woe,
The piercing force of winter's driving storm,
Have not the power to teach like one kind deed,
Nor half the sweet constraint of charity,
To guide us to thy God. O Prince of God!
Thy God be mine; for better can not be
Than this, the best of all—the Merciful!"

THE MARRIAGE OF ISAAC AND REBEKAH.

I.

The evening was far spent; the setting sun
Made luminous the cloudless western sky,
As a strong man, gray-bearded, eagle-eyed,
Halted his camels on the desert's verge.
There a fair city rose, in that midland
Clasped in the fruitful, warm embrace of streams
Whose founts in Eden's sacred garden sprang,
Nahor's fair city—Ur—the beaming eye,
Which, sparkling in a waste of barren sand,
With crystal waters blesseth many a league
Of pasture, waving palms and greenery.

The traveler bade halt; his journey's end
He knew at hand; he made his camels kneel
Hard by a well where women came to draw,
What time they came, the waters cool and clear,
Then, kneeling down himself, made fervent prayer
To Elohim, the Mighty One on High:
"Almighty God, the God of Abraham!
I pray Thee send to me good speed this day,
And kindness show my master, Abraham.
He is Thy chosen, and, with faith entire,
He hath obeyed when Thou hast given command.
'God is my help,' the name and faith I bear,
And Eliezer prays not doubtfully.
Now, that the daughters of the tribe draw near,

Bestow Thy heavenly wisdom to direct
My choice aright on her that is to be
Spouse of a prince and mother of a race,
Whose bands shall sweep the desert, line the shore,
Bear rule in distant lands beyond the sea,
And hold the unchanging truth that God is one.
And let it come to pass beside this well,
That damsel fair to whom my lips shall say,
'Let down thy pitcher, pray, that I may drink,'
And she shall say to me, a stranger, 'Drink,
And likewise to thy camel's parchéd lips
Will I bring water that shall slake their thirst,'
—Let that same damsel be the bride decreed
By heaven for Isaac, since her brow will wear
The surest badge of honorable stem,
The outward sign of the true, princely soul,
The heaven-appointed crown of noble thought,
The diadem of native royalty,
The grace and goodness of sweet courtesy."

Even as he ceased the throng of women came;
And first Rebekah, Bethuel's daughter fair,
Her pitcher on her shoulder, straight and tall
In that prime womanhood, when beauty blooms
Like the fresh rose which wears its earliest dew
Nor yet hath warmed with the young kiss of morn.
Down to the well she went, her pitcher filled,
And straightway up the stony steps returned.
Ben-Eliezer then to meet her ran,
And said: "Let me, I pray thee, from thy jar
A little draught of the pure water drink."
Then, bending like the wind-swept grass, she said:
"Yea, drink my Lord," and hasted to let down
Her pitcher on her hand, and gave him drink.
When he had lifted up from where he drank,
With kind and gentle voice she spake:

"Thy camels also—mark their anxious eyes—
Their fill of water will I draw for them."
Whereon, with step light as the mountain roe,
She sped, and in the trough her pitcher poured,
And ran again unto the well, and drew
Water for all the weary caravan.
But the man, full of wonder, held his peace,
Seeking by thought to learn, if so the Lord
Had made his journey prosperous or no.
And thus it came to pass when all the beasts,
Ten camels of the herd, had drunk their fill,
Stretching their scraggy necks, with patient eyes
Fixed on the friendly hand that watered them,
That the man drew two golden earrings forth,
Of half a shekel weight, the work of Tyre,
Wrought cunningly with many a rare device,
And two great bracelets of ten shekels weight,
Made to enclasp the wrist, with quaint design
Of vine and leaf and flower and tracery,
Like nature's self but done in crusted gold,
And gave them to her with due reverence.
Ben-Eliezer questioned her, and said:
"Whose daughter art thou? I beseech thee, say;
And may we in thy father's dwelling lodge?"
Then unto him she modestly replied,
With eyes abashed at the rich gifts she wore:
"I am the daughter of that Bethuel,
The son that Milcah unto Nahor bore.
Grain for thy beasts, food for thyself, a room
Wherein the traveler may rest in peace,
Are thine; what cheer we have is also thine;
To thee safe shelter, welcome, reverence;
To us the gladness of thy coming here
And auguries of weal whilst thou shalt stay."
Then bowed the man his head and worshipped God:
"Now, blessed be the God of Abraham,
Who hath not left my master destitute

Of His rich mercy, His abiding truth.
A wanderer, no star to guide my path,
The Lord hath led me in the certain way
And brought me to my master's brethren's house!"
The damsel ran, her eyes with wonder bright,
And in her father's house all these things told.

II.

Then Laban, Bethuel's eldest son and heir,
Of stature lofty, strong of limb and heart,
Sinewy and brown, with fearless brow and mien,
Like a young eagle perched among the crags,
Whose eye, beak, talons threaten red rapine,
Yet veiling subtle craft and strong desire
Under the guise of sparkling gaiety,
Weighed with a glance the ornaments of gold
His sister showed—the stranger's gift to her—
Reckoned their price, and valued hence the giver.
Laban strode forth with rapid step and free,
And came unto the man beside the well.
"Come in, thou blessed of the Lord," he said,
"Now, wherefore standest thou outside the gate?
Our house is ready, and thy place prepared,
With room for all thy camels and thy men."
Welcome was given, his camels were ungirt,
His sandals loosened, and cool water brought
To bathe his feet and those of all his men,
And meat was set before the man to eat.
But he would not. "My errand first," he said;
Then Laban unto him replied: "Speak on."
Then spake Ben-Eliezer, measuredly,
And said: "The servant I, of Abraham;
The Lord hath blessed my master bounteously,
Hath given him flocks and herds, silver and gold,
Servants and camels and all worldly gear;

And in his age, Sarah, his wife, likewise
Being old, bare him a son, through God's good grace,
And to this son he hath given all he hath.
Unto my master I have straitly sworn
That I would bring back from his father's house,
The angel of the Lord assisting me,
A wife for Isaac, if from Nahor's stem,
A budding spray, a scion of this stock,
A maid would come whom God hath richly dowered
With royal gifts of feature, form and soul.
The angel who before me went hath shown
Rebekah to me, fairest of the fair,
And by a special sign hath pointed out
This virgin as fit mate for Abraham's son.
If thou wilt kindly with my master deal
And truly, tell me; if not, tell me still,
That I may turn aside, and, going hence,
Be clear from the strait bondage of mine oath."
Then Laban spake him fair, and all went well.

III.

When the old sire was ready, Bethuel,
They brought Ben-Eliezer to his feet.
Bethuel, the princely Nahor's eldest son,
By patriarchal right, wisdom and power,
Still ruled where erst his father had borne sway.
His chair of judgment placed between the gates,
He leaned with all his weight of fourscore years
Upon his staff; his people stood around.
"Health, friend of Abraham!" he said, "and peace
And in my dwelling safety be with thee.
How fares it with my kinsman, Abraham,
In that far country where the stars go down?"
"Thy father's brother, in his wanderings wide,
Hath prospered greatly. He is rich and strong;
Men reverence his justice, fear his wrath."

"He acted wisely," Bethuel quick replied,
"To leave this narrow verge where freedom dies
For want of breath between the desert sands
And the worse barrenness of kingly power.
Rights are but paltry herbs that can not thrive
In the dense shadows of the royal grove,
Whose roots suck up all nutriment and strength,
The substance of the soil. We lack the sun.
Our children, too, with looking long and oft
Upon these gilded beasts of Nineveh,
That raven and live by prey and incense burn
To graven things no better than themselves,
—Our children grow rapacious, and forget
The law delivered to our fathers first
And handed down, the which obeying we
Submit our wills, and thus have peace with God.
They sigh for all the wretched pomp and show,
The vanity and nothingness of wealth;
Play kestrels to the sparrows, since they lack
The eagle's wing and talons to swoop down
And bear away the firstling of the flock.
But say you Abraham hath waxen old?
Alas, where'er men dwell, they wear away;
The blade will fret the scabbard as you stir;
Hung on the wall it dulls by slow decay;
And so, rest and you rust; rub and you rue."
Then Abraham's servant straightway answered him,
"My master's path hath not been all on turf;
His feet have trodden the thorns, his sides have bled.
There is no climate dedicate to right,
No sky where virtue holds unquestioned sway
Since man's transgression. We in darkness walk;
God dwells in light; by faith in Him we live."
Old Bethuel, bending courteously, inquired:
"How hath it fared with Abraham these years?
I pray thee, of my kinsman tell me more."
Then Eliezer's son made full reply:

"What time Lord Abraham from Haran went,
Moving with all his camels, herds and wealth
And brave Chaldean herdsmen armed with spears,
Trained to teach lessons to the spoiler bands
Which made them ware of troubling aught was his,
He came unto that fair and fruitful plain
Which gushing Abana watereth copiously,
Where stands Damascus with its mansions white,
Its rich bazaars and walls of masonry,
A pearly boss upon an emerald shield.
There he encamped, and paid with liberal hand
For all his wants out of his treasure large.
The town folk, envying his show of wealth,
Scorning his simple ways, and confident
In stone and heavy enginery of war,
Did him foul wrong; but his reprisal came
Sudden and scathing as the bolt of heaven.
His armed bands thronged on the lofty walls,
Scaled by their nimble feet; and smiting hands
Quick won the citadel, and the rich town
Lay at his mercy, suppliant, full of woe.
Their insolence to abject terror changed,
They crowned him king, and so he ruled the land.
But not forgetful wherefore he was called,
He waited for the hour to set him free,
That yet again, beneath the open sky,
His eyes should see the camels browse and sheep
Follow the shepherd as he went afield,
Leading with friendly voice to pastures green.
Seven years he held Damascus with firm hand,
Teaching truth, justice, noble probity,
Through law and righteous judgment, but yet more
By the full pattern of a perfect man.
Then he laid down his sceptre, and went forth
To the old life, but left a legacy
Of maxims wise, sound laws, a tranquil state,
And better still a memory ever green

As Pharfar's fields, that spring and ever spring
In verdure, when the world's athirst and sere.
While in Damascus he ruled more than king,
He found a man that fitted in his heart
As the blade rests within its guardian sheath;
Eliezer was his name. This man became
Steward of his wealth, his trusted bosom friend.
Behold, I am that Eliezer's son,
Who from Damascus Abraham drew forth
And made the guardian of his worldly gear.
Me, when no son had blessed his marriage bed,
The Prince of God had chosen for his heir,
The eldest child of all born in his house.
But the great God, who ordereth all things well,
Made void his purpose, granting by his grace
The child of gladness, Isaac, Prince of Peace.
Thus set aside by Heaven's assured decree,
My lot hath been to serve, and not bear sway;
But still my master's bounteous heart hath given
Trust for my troth, and favor for my faith:
Upon my arm as on a staff he leans,
My counsel hears, while I his burthens bear.
And now lest Isaac should his birthright mar
By taking from the Canaanites a wife
Steeped in the waters of idolatry,
A turbid flood whose stain no wave can cleanse
White from its foulness, he hath sent me here,
Back to the city where his brother reigned,
That from the daughters of a nobler line
A mate for Isaac I may lead as bride."

IV.

With much discourse, then both the aged men
Told each the other what he longed to know.
At length thus Bethuel spake: "There is no choice,
The thing proceedeth from the Lord; behold,

Rebekah is before thee; take her; go,
Let her be wife unto mine uncle's son."
Abraham's servant heard the sage's words;
Then worshipped God, low bowing to the earth.
From golden coffers, redolent of musk,
Scented with sandal wood and perfumes sweet
Fetched from the spicy islands of the sea,
Jewels he brought, of deftest workmanship,
Curious with silver, gold and precious gems,
That sparkled like the stars, or held imprisoned
The soul of flame, the verdure of the trees,
The distillation of the blue of heaven,
Such hues as deck the sunset caught in stone,
And that soft sheen enshrined within the pearl
Wrought in the workshops of the briny deep
By the fine touch of nature's alchemy;
Treasures of raiment from the looms of Ind
And ancient empires in remotest East;
Shawls of rare fabric, woven of camel's hair,
Filled in with colors of the faded fern
And dying leaf, with cabalistic words;
Silks and brocades and robes of various hue
And filmy tissues wrought with thread of gold.
These for Rebekah; for her mother, gifts
Meet for the mother of a royal bride;
And Laban, too, was not forgotten, lest he,
At the last moment, might start up some flaw.

He tarried feasting; and, when morning came,
The man rose early, saying, "Let us go;
Send me, I pray thee, to my master's house."
But to his words the maiden's kindred made
Answer,—"Abide with us a little space—
Ten days if so ye will; then go in peace."
"Hinder me not, I pray," the old man said,
"I do my master's bidding; it fares ill
To dally when the Lord is prospering."

Then answered they, "Call we the damsel then,
And learn from her which way her heart inclines."
They called Rebekah, saying, "Wilt thou go
With this man," and she answered, "I will go."
Then while they gathered round with smiles and tears,
One haggard stripling, with wild eyes, stood forth,
And sang, with plaintive melody, FAREWELL.

"Among the heavy herds, behold the feet
That twinkle, of the lissome, young gazelle;
Now here, now to the desert gone—O fleet!
Farewell! Farewell!

"In the cool dawn I watched the morning star,
That seemed to rule high heaven's hollow cell;
But with the day it vanished—O how far!
Farewell, Farewell!

"I thought the thistle down a fairy flower;
The winds have borne it—where I can not tell;
But in my heart the thistle stings each hour:
Farewell, Farewell!

"I found a trickling spring, child of the sky,
And dreamed Earth's source of tears had bid it swell;
The fount, its rocky bed, my heart, are dry;
Farewell, Farewell!"

Then, turning toward the desert, swift he fled
And straight as arrow leveled at the prey,
With eyes fast fixed on point invisible
To other eyes, beyond the waste of sand.
Then said Rebekah softly, "Let us go."

V.

Dismissed with blessings and with fervent prayers,
Rebekah went, attended by her nurse
And by her damsels and by arméd men,
Under the trusty Eliezer's care.
The wise old man, skilled in the desert's lore,
Threaded the waste, along the devious track
Of mountain defile and through pebbly plain,
Westward and southward to Laha-i Roi,
Where, at the Well of Succor, for a space
Isaac had been, and now, returning home,
Near Hebron dwelt, where Abraham still abode.
When they drew near to Mamre's stately oaks,
A smiling landscape broke upon the sight;
Gray olive orchards planted on the steeps,
And terraced vineyards blushing in the sun
And frequent flocks and verdure everywhere
Spangled with flowers, among the rocky hills.
Here at the eventide, to walk in thought,
Came Isaac, and he lifted up his eyes,
And saw the camels and Rebekah's train.
"Who is the man?" the high born maiden asked.
"It is the Master," Eliezer said,
"The Son of Gladness and the Prince of Peace."
Then o'er her face she threw the accustomed veil,
Shrouding her beauty like a cloud the sun,
And, lighting down, she forward went on foot,
To meet her Lord—hope other had she none.
The princely son of Abraham came swift,
And greeted her; and, listening graciously
To all of Eliezer's words, drew near,
And led her to a spacious tent, well pitched
And hung with heavy tapestries and silk,
Which had been Sarah's, was Rebekah's now.
Gentle and strong, the master of himself,
The child of promise wore his sonship well.

His steady eyes proclaimed a constant truth,
His comely features, healthful, cheerful, bright,
But yet composed and resolute and kind,
Well marked the heir selected to endure
With sweetness all the evil lot of man.
What evils are there to a mind resolved,
Set square upon a base of solid rock,
With duty, faith, fidelity and love,
Whose four sides face whatever tempests blow?
The Patriarch Abraham his blessing gave,
And Isaac took Rebekah for his wife;
Henceforth the type of mutual wedded love.

THE BURIAL OF JACOB.

Hard by the threshing floor of Atad, named
Henceforth, because of Egypt's mourning there,
Abel-Misraim, the procession paused,
That Pharaoh with his servant Joseph sent
To bury Israel, the man of peace.
Hither had Joseph brought, with all his house
And all his brethren, the long funeral train
Of his dead father, Israel, Prince of God;
Only their little ones, their flocks and herds,
Were left behind. For Jacob had desired,
With strong desire, that, in the sepulchre
Of his own people, they should lay him down,
Charging his sons that in Macpelah's cave,
Which Abraham, from Ephron, son of Heth,
Had bought in Canaan for a resting place,
Among his fathers he might sleep at last.
Now, they had come to do as he had bidden,
And with them, by the grace of Egypt's king,
All his chief servants, elders of his house,
And all the elders of the land of Nile,
His horsemen and his chariots of war,
Spearmen and bowmen and the Ethiop slaves
And all the retinue of royalty;
For Pharaoh's chief delight was in the man,
Who read the future by the gift of God,
And in the days of famine saved the land.
Him had he placed at his right hand, and given
The second chariot in the land, and made
Chief councillor in his realm.

For seven days
The sad procession halted in its march
At Atad, and with funeral games and songs
Did honor to the dead.

With calm, still brow,
Joseph looked on the bier where Israel lay,
Embalmed in state, the people gathered round.
"Chieftains!" he said, and waved his golden spear
With gesture grave, as one used to command:
"Chieftains and warriors! children of the Dead!
Behold the body of a man God loved
And chose before his birth to be a prince,
The fruitful father of a race, whose sons
Shall swarm innumerous as the scaly fish
That crowd the Nile, or honey bees that hive
In the dark caverns of this blooming land,
Or stars that gem the vaulted roof of heaven.
God tried him sorely many times and oft,
And made him serve ere that He gave him rule,
Sweeping his heart strings with compelling hand,
Till they poured forth the fullness of lament,
Yet not rebelling, but with humble praise
Of God's great goodness. He was steadfast, true,
Firm as the rock, and patient to the end."
He ceased, and to him answered Potiphar,
The Captain of the Guard, his sometime lord,
Now under his dominion and his friend.

"The Lord keeps watch above the pure in heart
And lets his light before their faces shine,
In dungeon and in battle takes their part,
And to their weakness lendeth strength divine.

"The Lord is merciful unto the just
And full of loving kindness to the true;
He blesseth him that keepeth faithful trust,
With favor falling soft as summer dew.

"On him shall come the choicest gifts of heaven,
Honor and fame shall dwell in his right hand,
To him the praise and glory shall be given,
Who his own spirit holds with firm command."

Then clashed the cymbals and the trumpets brayed,
And the long lines in serried rank arrayed,
With martial tread marched by the lofty bier,
And, as they passed, with reverence lowered the spear.
While from their throats rude as the rushing surge,
Rang forth the chantings of the Chieftain's dirge,

CHORUS OF SOLDIERS.

The chariots and horseman of Egypt!
The wings of the Pharaoh's might,
When he sweeps round the verge of dominion,
In triumphant and terrible flight;

His talons in the red day of battle,
When our javelins are crusted with gore,
And the corpses of warriors, once mighty,
Lie naked and stark on the shore!

The Nile brings her tribute of fatness
From the mountain-rock fed by the cloud,
To the deified child of the Sun-God,
At whose footstool the nations have bowed.

The Great King hath honored the Hebrew
With the place of advice and command,
And Joseph, revealer of secrets,
Hath his seat at the Monarch's right hand.

Hail Joseph, thou master of knowledge?
Thou art upright, pure and discreet,
Thy wisdom hath saved us from famine,
And the words of thy counsel are sweet.

Thou dost journey to bury thy father,
Where the bones of his forefathers lie,
Far away from the land of his sojourn
'Neath the blue of the Syrian sky.

He hath given thee double, as portion,
Of the lands that he won in the fight,
When he brandished his spear in the battle
And vanquished the fierce Amorite.

The mightiest soldiers of Pharaoh
The chieftain, in honor, have borne;
With clashing of falchion and buckler,
And lament for the princely, they mourn.

He had wrought, he had fought, he had conquered,
He had taught with a marvellous spell,
For his words had the sweetness of honey
And his wisdom was deep as a well.

But a conqueror came who was stronger,
Who was wiser, more mighty, whose breath
Is like the Simoom of the desert,
Resistless—the conqueror Death!

While yet they filed with solemn pace and slow,
With equal ranks and spear heads carried low,
On the horizon's furthest edge, a whirl
Of dust appeared, and then, with lengthened curl,
Stretched to a plume, a cloud, whose dusky arch
O'erhung a band of horsemen on the march.
Halting far off, their chieftain forward rode,
Whose lifted hand and friendly gesture showed,
Like the white pennon floating from his spear,
His mission peaceful. Slowly he drew near
Robed in snow white, his girdle crimson red,

He wore no cover to his haughty head;
Proud was his bearing, fearless, free and bold,
Matched to his steed, like marble set on gold.
His steed, the peerless mistress of her race,
Seemed just to touch the earth and leave no trace;
With nostrils wide, and pointed ears attent,
And eyes large, watchful and intelligent,
She moved responsive to her master's hand,
Swayed by the magic of complete command.
With sweeping glance that took in far and near,
He spake in accents musical and clear:
"Children of Israel! the peace of God
Be yours, while under his afflictive rod.
I come, a son of Ishmael, to aid
In the last honors to a kinsman paid.
We claim one father, Abraham, in whose line,
You have *your* birthright, while for me is mine;
Yours is the blessing, peace, the promised land;
For me, the spoil, the feud, the desert sand.
E'en as the crescent moon my strength shall grow,
Though every man shall hold me as his foe;
Let every hand keep what its might can win,
Thus must we end our course, as we begin.
Ishmael asks nought, of sovereignty assured,
Lord of the empire by his sword secured;
And Israel, too, his silver tongue once heard,
Will nations lead obedient to his word.
One sire to us, one God there is to all,
In whom the tides of mankind rise and fall."

Joseph gave welcome to the friendly sheik,
Who led his clansmen round with shout and shriek,
Venting the loud lament in barbarous wise,
Till the air thrilled with wild funereal cries.
At length, the priests, white-stoled and grave, appear,
And chanting loud their solemn dirge draw near.

PRIESTS OF MEMPHIS.

Wrestler of the night! Till the stars grew pale.
  Thou wast strong of heart in danger;
Thou hadst thy prayer, thou didst prevail,
  Striving with the angelic stranger.

PRIESTS OF THEBES.

Thou wast the wise one, man of peace!
  Wise in thy day and generation;
Thou saw'st thy flocks and herds increase,
  Thy sons become a mighty nation.

PRIESTS OF ON.

Rest with thy fathers, Prince of Ur!
  May no evil dreams molest thee;
Death was thy sole conqueror,
  Fortune, fame, long life have blessed thee.

An aged priest, wrinkled, dim-eyed and hoar,
And versed in all of Egypt's ancient lore,
For a brief moment bent in silent prayer,
Then breathed his benediction on the air;
And, with his eyes fixed on the stately bier,
Rehearsed his creed in accents full and clear.

  Patriarch! thou art now at rest
  In the Under World, and blest
  With the bride beloved in youth,
  In full knowledge of the truth,
  In sweet practice, without fear,
  Of all virtues that endear
  Man to man and man to God.
  The path which here thy feet have trod
  In the Netherworld doth end,
  Where thy judge will prove thy friend.

Soon thy soul will pass the tomb
To the awful Hall of Doom,
Where Osiris sits enthroned
To hear the lists of sins atoned,
Lord of judgment and of truth,
Tempering righteousness with ruth.
There the lynx-eyed watch-God stands,
With even scales poised in his hands,
In whose balance shall be tried
All men's hearts, which justified
Shall be, when each sin is weighed
And every debt to heaven is paid.
Truth's pure image shall incline
The beam no whit 'gainst heart of thine,
While thrice mighty Truth records
What the judgment seat awards,
And Osiris shall declare
Thee, the Truthful, doomed to share
In that All-truth which he gives
To him who purely, truly lives;
And let thee syllable the Name,
Of One from whom all being came,
And dwell in the pervading Soul
Which still exists while æons roll,
Which shall endure when time shall cease
And throbbing infinites find peace.

Above the throng, aloft in sacred state,
Pharaoh's high-priest wise Potiphera sate.
Revered the man for virtue and for lore,
Beloved by all who Egypt's gods adore;
His daughter fair by Joseph had been led,
A monarch's gift, to share the marriage bed.
With mien majestic, lifting up his hand,
The pontiff waved the sceptre of command;
Then with a voice, deep, sorrowful, and strong,
Poured forth his praises of the dead in song.

"Sheik of the desert! Thou might'st have rested
Near to the waves of the ancient river,
Where Ra, the Sun-God, the falcon-crested,
At the day of doom will the just deliver.

"Thou might'st have slumbered where blooms of lotus
Scent the sweet waters that roll to the ocean,
Like joys that are cast on moments that float us
On to the gulf where ends thought and emotion.

"Thou might'st have slept in a high-vaulted chamber,
The Great King's signet upon the portal,
Embalmed, and wrapped with jewels and amber,
Ready to rise in a youth immortal.

"But with thy fathers thou would'st be buried,
Princes of Ur, the beautiful fountain,
And Pharaoh hath sent his soldiers serried
To lay thee in the rock of the mountain.

"Thou hast thy portion with those before thee;
Thy sons entomb thee with lamentations;
But the God who guided thee watches o'er thee,
And yet will make thee father of nations."

The high-priest ended. Then with sobbings low,
As lapse of waters when the overflow
Of brimming Nilus pulses either shore
And Sothis rises on the world once more,
The sacred ranks their voices lifted high
And rolled a parting chorus to the sky.

CHORUS OF PRIESTS.

With weeping and wail we bear him,
With solemn and holy psalms,
Back to his kindred sleeping
Under Machpelah's palms.

Seven days at Atad grievously they mourned,
With melancholy pomp and funeral rites,
Till all the people of the land took note,
And henceforth called it Egypt's mourning place.
The Egyptians turned their faces to the Nile,
And Israel's sons, as he commanded them,
To Mamre bore their father's body on,
In Canaan's land, and there they buried him
Within the cave that Abraham had bought
For his and for his people's sepulture.
Joseph looked steadfastly upon the vault,
High hollowed in the rocky hill, and said:
"Unto our journey's end we come, the end
Of all his journeys too; here let him rest."
Then all the brethren sang, in praise of him,
A psalm, whose burthen was of God's great grace
Unto the man who loved and served the Lord.

Blest is the man who fears the Lord,
Delighting greatly in His word;
Mighty his offspring in the land,
Under Jehovah's favoring hand.

Honor and wealth his house sustain,
His truth forever shall remain;
On his deep darkness breaks a light,
For God is gracious to the right.

Happy the man who kindness shows,
From whose large heart sweet bounty flows;
When enemies assail his gate,
Victory upon his steps shall wait.

Unmoved as earth upon its base,
A mark of God's unfailing grace,
Fearless of evil, fixed in heart,
He trusts the Lord, and does his part.

His open hand supplies the poor,
Welcomes the stranger at his door;
His power shall grow, his name shall rise,
His justice live beyond the skies.

Envy shall gnash its teeth in vain,
And jealous wickedness complain;
Their evil thoughts with them shall die,
But God will set the just on high.*

All rites performed, the caravan returned
To Egypt. Then did Joseph's brethren fear
He would requite the evil they had done.
So, in their father's name, they spake to him:
"Forgive thy brethren's trespasses and sin;
Forgive, we pray, the evil done to thee."
And Joseph wept, when thus they had drawn near,
And answered: "Fear not. Am I in God's stead?
What evil things ye thought, God brought to good;
Therefore, fear not; peace be to you; for I
Will nourish you and all your little ones."
And thus with comfortable words he spake.
So Joseph's tears thus honorably shed,
And Joseph's tender grace thus nobly shown
To the false brethren who had wronged his youth,
Were garlands greener on his father's tomb
Than cassia or the fadeless flowers there strewn;
And sweet FORGIVENESS was the monument
He reared unto his father's memory.

*A new version of the 112th Psalm.

SAMSON.

AS SUNG BY THE DAUGHTERS OF DAN.

It is a gala day. With trump and drum
In long procession and in grand array,
The proud Philistines to their temple come,
Where the false Fish God holds accurséd sway.

There the harsh cymbals with their clangor drown
The groans of victims; riot rules the hall,
Where grinning Dagon's fiendish shape looks down
On prince and priest in lawless festival.

Hot steam the joints of roasted kid and calf,
And golden fruits pile high the groaning board,
While the coarse jest and loud tumultuous laugh,
As breakers burst, are in rude cadence roared.

Their beakers brimmed, their eyes all red with wine,
And every voice attuned to hate and scorn,
The High Priest to the wardens gives the sign
To bring the Blind Man who is grinding corn—

The Judge of Israel, who great deeds had done,
Who bore from Gaza her high brazen gate,
Whose arm wrought miracles at Ascalon,
A prisoner now, cast down and desolate.

Thus spake the haughty priest: "Bring to our feet
Him that for Israel dared to try the might
Of Dagon; here Philistia's nobles meet
That they may mock him in his sorry plight."

Woe! Woe! to Samson! In Delilah's arms
He laid him down in feverish, fatal sleep;
Her honeyed tongue, her meretricious charms
Betrayed the hero; see, his blind eyes weep.

He weeps, yet grinds with ceaseless toil the mill,
Urged by the hard taskmaster's cruel goad,
But his proud spirit and unbending will
Still lift his front beneath his sin's sad load.

But have thou patience; roll thy sightless eyes
Up to the heavens and their unanswering night,
Thou see'st not yet, but with a glad surprise
This blackest mystery will end in light—

A light that through thy blindness and the clouds
Of dark despair that lower o'er thy brain
Will strike, and rend the veil of doubt that shrouds
Thy mind, and make thine awful mission plain!

From his rude toil, the grinding of the corn,
Between his jailers, stalked with lofty port
The Judge of Israel, to meet the scorn
And ribald taunts of false Philistia's court.

Hoarse pealed the laughter through the vaulted hall,
And at the captive flung was many a jest,
When spake a chieftain: "See yon sullen thrall,
Forced now to do his foemen's least behest.

"Green withes he burst and hempen bonds he brake,
But in Delilah's arms he laid him down,
And told his secret for his leman's sake—
Samson, thou wearest wisdom like a crown!

"Sweet were his dreams, when music's voice beguiled,
And soft his slumber when the enchantress sang,
And while her fingers plied the shears he smiled,
Nor heard our coming and our armor's clang."

"We took him in our toils as men snare beasts,
We seared his eye-balls, lodged him in a cell,
He grinds our corn, and makes sport for our feasts.
How fares it with thee, Judge of Israel?"

Then Samson groaned. "Is this the sad estate,
To which an angel called me ere my birth?
I was a mighty man. Behold my fate,
I live a by-word for the oppressor's mirth!

"But yet! my hair hath grown, my strength returns,
I feel new power throb in each limb and thew,
Again my soul for valorous exploits burns,
Visions of vengeance flash upon my view!"

Then flushed his forehead, as with potent wine,
While on the multitude there came a dread.
"Now, Samson, be thy manhood's vigor thine;
Supernal power descend upon thy head."

He leaned against the pillars; laughter ceased,
And a great silence brooded in the air;
Hushed was the revelry and stilled the feast,
Fear fell on all the people gathered there.

He bent his shoulders; the great pillars swayed;
Wrenched from their base, with awful crash they fall;
Column and porch and dome in ruin laid
Heap high a tomb—and there were buried all.

Foul Dagon toppled from his lofty seat,
A shattered God, prone on the bloody floor,
With priests and nobles crushed about his feet—
And Israel's Judge appeared to men no more.

PART SECOND.

NEW VERSIONS OF PSALMS.

O sing unto the Lord a new song;
Sing unto the Lord all the earth.
—Psalm 96, vi.

I will sing of mercy and judgment;
Unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing.
—Psalm 101, vi.

THE HARP OF DAVID.

A SONNET.

O for a sounding voice to praise the Lord!
O for a soul touched with seraphic fire!
A spirit that to heaven shall aspire!
A hand to sweep with forceful skill the chord
As David smote it and God so adored
That countless tongues have joined the reverent choir,
And shared his joys, griefs, penitence and ire
And the large triumphs of his harp and sword!

But none have risen in all the realm of art,
No bard, nor master high of minstrelsy,
To match the ruddy youth, the grizzled King,
And to Thine altar, Lord, such offering bring
Of prayer and song; so I must silent be,
Or praise in whispers of a grateful heart.

PSALM IV.

1.

Lord, I lift my woful cry
From the depths of deep distress;
Turn on me a pitying eye,
Hear a contrite sinner's sigh;
Thou the God of righteousness,
Pity, pardon, comfort, bless.

2.

O ye erring sons of men,
Why pursue the flattering flame
Of vanity through fog and fen,
Or burrow deep in falsehood's den?
Why seek to cover me with shame,
Because I glory in His name?

3.

Learn the Lord hath set apart,
For a home in heavenly halls,
Him that hath a righteous heart,
God's commands his only chart;
The Lord will hear him when he calls,
The Lord will lift him when he falls.

4.

Seek Jehovah filled with awe;
Bow to His almighty will;

Obedient to His gracious law,
Search thy heart's most secret flaw;
When doubt and darkness seem to fill
Thy cup with gall, trust and be still.

5.

In the Lord put all thy trust;
Offer Him as sacrifice;
A heart that's pure, a life that's just;
He knows His servant is but dust;
He will not mark what is amiss,
But raise him to the realms of bliss.

6.

Though the many vainly say,
"Who will show us any good?"
Let Thy face with heavenly ray,
Light our lives to perfect day;
Thus the wrong may be withstood,
And the right have masterhood.

7.

Thou hast made my spirit glad,
More than in the fruitful time
When Thy bounty seemed to add
Corn and wine to what I had;
Now the cymbals gladly chime,
Joy is in her morning prime.

8

When the shades of evening creep,
I will lay me down in peace,
And close my tired eyes in sleep;
Thou, O Lord, my soul wilt keep,
When my spirit finds release
And life's troubled dream shall cease.

PSALM XXIII.

I.

What mighty shepherd leads these flocks?
It is the Lord;
No robber from the lonely rocks,
With spear and sword,
Shall burst the barrier, break the fold
His arm protects;
Safe is the covert, strong the hold
Where He directs;
And, therefore, nothing can I lack,
His eye and hand shall guard my track.

II.

In pastures green of tender grass
I safe repose;
He leads me where, smooth as a glass,
The water flows—
Still waters, by whose tranquil stream
Quiet I find,
And comfort; so is soothed life's dream:
The wandering mind,
Back to the paths of peace secure
His love and care guide and restore.

III.

Yea, though a wanderer I walk
In chill and gloom,
And down the darksome Valley stalk,
Where lifts the tomb

Its portal, and death's shadows fall,
I fear no ill;
Thy sheltering hand is over all
And with me still;
Thy rod shall guide me if I stray,
Thy staff give comfort on the way.

IV.

From that wild waste to mansions fair
In Thy bright land,
I come, and find a welcome there,
Led by Thy hand;
For me a royal banquet spread
In sight of foes,
And precious oil poured on my head,
My cup o'erflows;
And God's good angels watch the rest
I find, forever, as His guest.

PSALM XXV.

To thee, O Lord, I lift my soul;
My God, I trust in Thee;
Let me not feel my foe's control,
His triumph over me.

Yea, let not them that fear Thy name,
Obedient to Thy laws,
For love of Thee be put to shame,
Or suffer without cause.

Show me, O Lord, Thy chosen ways,
Teach me to tread Thy path;
My hope art Thou through all my days,
Safe from eternal wrath.

Remember, Lord, how oft of old
Thy kindness hath been shed,
With tender mercies manifold,
Like oil upon my head.

Remember not the thoughtless sin
Wherein my youth transgressed;
Let penitence a pardon win,
And pity guilt confessed.

How gracious is the righteous Lord;
He succors those who seek;
He helps poor sinners with His word,
In judgment guides the meek.

His paths are mercy, love and truth,
And He will pardon grant
To such as, trusting in His ruth,
Shall keep His covenant.

What man is He the Lord that fears?
Him shall He teach to stand;
His soul shall dwell at ease through years;
His sons shall till the land.

The secret of the Lord is given,
The mighty mystery shown
To them who love Him; who have striven
For truth, the truth have known.

O eyes, look toward the Lord, though yet
My feet be tangled fast
In cunning meshes of the net,
He'll set me free at last.

Turn, tender Savior, turn to me,
Behold my piteous state,
Afflicted and in misery,
Cast down and desolate.

The troubles of my heart have grown,
But Thou canst make them less;
To Thee are all our sorrows known;
Lift me from my distress.

On my affliction, grief and pain,
Look down with pitying eye;
Show me Thy favor once again,
And hear my contrite sigh.

Though foes swarm thick that seek my shame,
With eager, ravening hate;
Save Thou the soul that loves Thy name
And trusts to Thee its fate.

Let perfectness upon me wait,
And righteous dealing stand;
My hope hath looked in every state
Unto Thine outstretched hand.

Deliver, Lord, Thine Israel
From all its weight of woe,
And from Thy ever springing well
Let living waters flow.

PSALM XXXVI.

Before my mind, as in a glass,
The workings of the wicked pass,
Each secret sin and evil deed,
Word of deceit, and act of greed.

Thy mercy, Lord, embraceth man,
As earth rests sure in heaven's span;
And, as o'er clouds lifts clear the sky,
Thy faithfulness still spreads on high.

As a great mountain range stands fast,
Thy righteousness, O Lord, shall last;
While in Thy judgments, like the deeps,
The mystery of Thy mercy sleeps.

And yet, O God, how excellent,
And in what loving kindness meant
Is all Thou dost and all Thou art,
When bruising this poor human heart.

Therefore, though grief the eye may cloud,
And darkness seem the heavens to shroud,
In Thee we trust, and hope still clings
Under the shadow of Thy wings.

The sons of man who trust in Thee
The glories of Thy house shall see;
And where Thy rapturous river flows
Shall drink the healing of all woes.

From Thee, Lord, flows the fount of life,
Thy calm shall close the weary strife,
And in Thy light shall we see light
When perfect love unseals our sight.

To them that seek Thy truth to know,
Thy loving kindness, Lord, still show,
And let the man that's true of heart
In Thy full righteousness have part.

Let not the foot of insolence
Break down the wall of my defence;
Guard me against the ungodly hand
With strength the wicked to withstand.

PSALM LXVII.

Almighty God, Thy mercy show,
And on us let Thy favor shine,
That all the earth Thy ways may know,
Thy saving health and love divine.
O praise, ye people, His great name,
And all His grace and power proclaim.

O let the nations all rejoice
That Thou shalt come to judge aright,
And let them sing with gladsome voice,
For God shall lead them in His might.
O praise, ye people, His great name,
And all His grace and power proclaim.

The earth its increase shall afford,
And God, our God, His people bless;
While every land shall fear the Lord,
And His almighty name confess.
O praise, ye people, His great name.
And all His grace and power proclaim.

PSALM CIII.

VERSION MADE ON THE OCCASION OF SIR MOSES MONTEFIORE'S ONE HUNDREDTH BIRTHDAY.

O bless Jehovah, soul of mine,
  And praise His holy name;
Let spirit, will and heart combine
  His mercies to proclaim!
    Forget not all the benefits
    Of Him who in the heavens sits.

Bless the Lord God, O grateful soul,
  For all His godly gifts,
Who pardons sin and makes thee whole,
  And by His grace uplifts
    Thy body, trembling o'er the grave,
    When all are impotent to save.

Who hath with loving kindness crowned
  Thy life, and all thy days
With sweet compassion doth surround,
  And guards thee in thy ways,
    And grants to age with tender ruth,
    The eagle's strength, the joys of youth.

PSALM CIII.

PART II, VERSE 6.

GOD'S MERCIFUL DEALINGS WITH HIS PEOPLE.

Not me alone the Lord doth bless,
  His people all are blessed;
He executeth righteousness
  And judgment for the oppressed;
    His ways to Moses He made known,
    His works to Israel were shown.

The Lord, long suffering, great in good,
  Hath mercy, plenteous grace,
And, mighty in His masterhood,
  Turns not away His face;
    The Lord will not forever chide.
    Nor will His anger long abide.

His retribution hath not dealt
  Our sins their just reward;
For, lo, the pity He hath felt
  Hath sheathed the avenging sword;
    And as the heavens are high above,
    So great His mercy, broad His love.

For look how wide the east and west,
  In space are set apart,
So stand their sins, at God's behest,
  Who have a contrite heart;
    Yea, as a father loves his child,
    Bends down God's love to the defiled.

He knows whereof our forms are made,
That we are very dust;
The days of man are grass—the blade
That breaks the furrow's crust,
To flourish as a flower to-day
And wither then and pass away.

For when the biting desert wind
Shall touch it with its breath,
It fades, and none shall ever find
Its place—and this is death;
But God's great mercy will endure
Forever for the good and pure.

In heaven the Lord hath made His seat,
His kingdom ruleth all.
Praise ye the Lord, His praise repeat,
Ye who obey His call,
Ye angels who excel in might,
Ye messengers of power and light!

O praise the Lord, ye that fulfil
The words of His command,
And ye who hearken and are still,
And, patient, waiting stand;
O praise the Lord, ye hosts on high,
Ye heirs of immortality!

Yea, as the spirit tongues rejoice
In song of seraphim,
And the elect—their Maker's choice—
Praise God with psalm and hymn,
So let His works an anthem roll,
And praise the Lord, O thou, my soul.

PSALM CXI.

GOD'S WORKS.

When e'er, in secret, friends join prayer,
Or multitudes Thy praises share,
O Lord, my overflowing heart
Thanks Thee for what Thou dost and art.

Great are Thy works to them that seek,
The loving, penitent and meek;
And worthy Thou of psalm and praise,
To Whom our hearts in song we raise.

Honor is given, for strong and sure
Thy righteousness shall still endure;
And when the heavens shall pass away,
Thy grace and mercy yet shall stay.

The man that fears Thee shall not want;
And, mindful of Thy covenant,
Thy works, displayed in every age,
Make earth Thy people's heritage.

In verity and judgment stands
Each work of the Almighty hands,
And all Thou dost command, or do,
Stands fast forever, just and true.

Thou'st given redemption man to save;
Thy covenant triumphs o'er the grave;
Holy and reverend is Thy name,
O God, eternally the same.

Who fears Thee, Lord, will understand;
And he that follows Thy command
Is born into that realm where truth
And wisdom dwell in endless youth.

PSALM CXVI.

A PARAPHRASE.

I love the Lord God the Allfather,
  Omnipotent, merciful, wise;
The Lord who in pity would rather
  Hearken than turn from my cries.
I love Him, because, in my crying,
  He hath bent down His ear to my prayer;
Because He hath heeded my sighing,
  And soothed all my sorrow and care.
Nevermore shall I cease to adore Him,
  The Physician who tenderly heals
The wounds of the souls that implore Him,
  And graciously hears their appeals.

The sorrows of death seem to double,
  And the tortures of hell rack my soul;
I am plunged in the depths of my trouble,
  And the waters of sin o'er me roll;
What hand will now help the worn swimmer,
  Or rescue the waif from the wave?
Hope fades as my sight becomes dimmer—
  Lord, stretch forth Thy hand strong to save!
I called on the Lord to deliver,
  On my Savior who willingly hears,
Asking alms from the bountiful giver,
  Who distilleth a balm for all tears.

How gracious is God, the all-holy,
How beneficent, kind, slow to ire;
He preserveth the simple and lowly;
He hath freed me when fast in the mire;
He rescues from stake and from scaffold;
Return, O my soul, to thy rest,
Though worn with the strife, weary, baffled,
For the Lord will bestow what is best.
He crowns me with favor; His calling
Hath conferred on me grace, free as air;
He holds up my footsteps from falling,
And delivers my soul from the snare.

He wipeth the salt tears that blister
Heavy eyelids, when trickling they start,
And poureth His balsam where fester
The wounds of an agonized heart.
While I walk in the land of the living,
I will stand before God in my soul,
Before God the gracious, forgiving,
Who maketh the broken heart whole.
I believed, and have hastily muttered
The thought of affliction, and said,
That all men are liars; but uttered
Be the truth; Truth is living, not dead:
For truth is eternal, and never
Will I turn from her beauty, but dwell
In her pure habitations forever,
Secure from the leasings of hell.

But how to the Lord, the great lender,
Shall the sum of my debts be repaid;
And how shall my gratitude render
Due return for His bounty and aid?
No tribute He asks; veneration
Shall, with love and humility, frame
A prayer for the cup of salvation,
And invoke the Great King's holy name.

In presence of skeptic and scoffer,
I shall make to Jehovah my vow;
Yea, prayers to the Lord will I offer,
While my suppliant spirit shall bow.
Before the great congregation,
My God shall be praised and adored,
And in every border and nation
Shall my homage be paid to the Lord.

Thy servant, O Sovran eternal!
Though wholly unworthy Thy care,
Prays for life in the city supernal
And adoption that makes him Thine heir.
The son of Thy handmaid, whose station
Is low, from his bondage and shame
Would be made the child of salvation
And give thanks to the Lord's mighty name.
While I walk in the land of the living,
My voice on the Master shall call,
And the sacrifice of my thanksgiving
Shall be made to the Father of all.

In the courts of God's house, and forever,
In the golden Jerusalem, yea,
By the banks where flows His own river
Through the city of pure endless day
From battlements built of pure beryl
And streets paved with crystal and gold,
Where we turn from earth's sorrow and peril
To the vision of splendor unrolled,
In the midst of thee, Sion supernal,
In thy midst shall my glad spirit sing
The praise of the Father eternal,
The glory and might of thy King.

PART THIRD.

DEVOTIONAL VERSE.

"I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will speak of all Thy marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in Thee. Yea, my songs will I make of Thy name, O Thou Most Highest."

—Psalm IX, 1, 2.

THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN.

Blessed Luke, beloved Physician!
  Forth thou fared'st through many a land,
Sent by Christ on mercy's mission,
  Bearing in thy helping hand
To the crushed the balm of healing,
  To the weary heavenly rest,
And to darkened souls revealing
  Truth—the end of earthly quest.

Thine of human pens the aptest
  Did the Master's words record,
Told the tale of John the Baptist,
  Herald of the coming Lord;
Lips were thine that flowed with honey,
  Sweetening the cup of care,
Eyes that shone with radiance sunny,
  Lighting up the dungeon bare.

Friend of Paul, Apostle, Preacher,
  All his toils were shared by thee—
Saint, but yet a human creature,
  Needing human sympathy—
And though gracious, splendid, glorious,
  Whelming as the rolling sea,
Over man and fiend victorious—
  Left at last alone with thee.

Once a sower went forth sowing,
  In the parable of old,

And like his, thy good seeds, growing,
  Yielded harvests manifold;
But in all thy noble mission,
  Grandest triumph of thy art,
Thou did'st find, beloved physician,
  Binding up that royal heart.

So with Paul thus linked and banded,
  As companion, scribe and friend,
Thou art down the ages handed,
  Loved and honored to the end;
In the Apocalyptic vision,
  On the Apostle's seal engraved
Is thy symbol, saint physician,
  Writ with those the Lamb hath saved.

THE LADDER.

Work plows the furrow, sows the seed,
And garners every golden deed,
Whose plenteous store and priceless worth
Spread peace and kindness through the earth.

Patience, long suffering, will abide
In hope though angry fate may chide;
What ills its medicine may not cure,
It bids thee bear; wait and endure.

Love paints the lily, gilds the gold,
Relights the eye that waxeth old,
Gives earth its charm, gives heaven its bliss,
Forecasts a better world in this.

Faith is the light and prayer the eye
That to our vision ope the sky;
With prayer and patience, work and love,
We climb, we soar, we live above.

To work, to wait, to love, to pray;
If thus my life might wear away,
Not fortune's smile, nor fortune's frown,
Would lift me up, could cast me down.

THE PRISONER OF WAR.

How vain the flowery paths I trod,
With eyes that looked on earth alone
And lifted not their gaze to God
Upon his seraph-circled throne.

Earth knelt and offered to my soul,
That thirsted for the transient bliss,
The wine in pleasure's golden bowl,
Which blots all other worlds than this.

But wealth, with flapping wings, took flight,
And poverty crouched at the door,
Disasters fell, as clouds of night
Gather above a storm-beat shore.

And dread disease, with harrowing hand,
Dragged me along the darksome vale,
Where mope and mow a shadowy band
Of ghastly forms and phantoms pale.

And war smote hard with sevenfold scourge,
Which mangles where its sharp lash falls;
Defeat drove to destruction's verge
The captive of these prison walls.

Alone within this silent cell,
Caged in by lock and iron bar,
Where stands despair as sentinel,
Faith cannot see Hope's twinkling star—

O Star, obscured in shades of gloom,
That shroud thee from my failing sight,
No more into this living tomb
Will break thy beam of friendly light?

Ah! what avails now rectitude,
Or what this sturdy heart of oak,
When, in this lonely dungeon mewed,
I lay it bare of shield and cloak.

Father! I know my way was wrong,
Before these troubles o'er me came;
But since disasters on me throng
I learn Thy statutes, know Thy name.

Look up, sore heart, thy Savior stands,
His meek eyes in forgiveness bent
Upon my pleading outstretched hands,
With tender thoughts on thee intent.

If, then, my Lord stand by my side,
And this torn breast His love shall bind,
My ills I bless, and shall abide
With patient heart and soul resigned.

FORGIVENESS.

Tyrant wrong, in vain defying,
I have met with voice and sword;
Yet, like Peter, when denying
Thee, I too have shunned Thee, Lord!

But as Peter, sinning, weeping,
Let me still Thy shepherd be,
O'er Thy little lambs still keeping
Watch and ward, as Thou o'er me,

Seventy times hast Thou forgiven
Every trespass, all my debt;
Yet when I with foes have striven,
How hard to pardon and forget!

Help me, Lord, to feel toward others
The forgiveness Thou hast shown;
Mindful that these foes are brothers,
Let me judge myself alone.

CHRIST IS ALL.

Should our Master ask in part
For the tribute that we owe,
Claim His dues from head and heart,
Or His mercy fail to show,
How dreadful, yet how just;
But Spirit speaks to dust,
"Lo, Christ is All!"

Boast we how secure we stand,
Solid as the ancient rock!
Lo! from mountain peak to strand,
It is rent with earthquake shock.
So perish all thy pride;
Trust to the riven side
Of Christ, our All.

Writ thy doom is: "Thou art weighed,
Soul, poor soul, thou'rt wanting found;"—
Mandate that must be obeyed;
List to the tremendous sound!
Our answer; "Christ hath died;
Our sins are justified."
Christ is our All.

Look ye how His mercy spreads,
Bringing pardon to the world;
Waving o'er our humbled heads,
His white banner is unfurled—
The standard of "The Son,"
It tells what love hath done,
Through Christ our All.

OUR HOPE.

II TIMOTHY 2, xi, xiii. ST. LUKE 21, xvi, xviii.

If with Lord Christ in death we lie,
With Him we'll live again on high;
If now with Him we suffer pain,
With Him, hereafter, we shall reign;
But if our Lord we here deny,
He'll turn away, deaf to our cry;
If we believe not in His name,
Yet faithful still He stands, the same,
And His the glory, ours the shame.

When in the depths, cast down by fate,
We pine, pursued by human hate,
Through the thick darkness breaks a star;
Christ comes to loose the prison bar;
Then forth with Him, through narrow gate,
We walk the way that leads us straight,
Past frowning walls, up Calvary's steeps,
To where the blessed Mary weeps,
And Heaven opes to him who sleeps.

THE ALL-SUFFICIENT.

Bring me gifts; from the East star-led kings came adoring
A babe born at Bethlehem, poor and unknown,
With gold, myrrh and frankincense, humbly imploring
A place at my feet by the manger of stone.
O Lord! who hast made the mid-heaven Thy throne,
I can bring Thee no gifts, I have naught of mine own;
Vile rags, stained with Earth and time-tattered, encumber
My soul, but Thy grace and good gifts without number
Can cleanse and enrich me—Thou, Thou alone!

Pay thy tribute; a vase of the first gentle pressing
From the fruit of the vintage, the blood of the vine,
Its crystalline lights and aroma confessing
It fit to be poured as libation of mine.
O Master Almighty! O Ruler Divine!
I have nothing to bring Thee but lees of the wine;
But one drop from Thy side or hand prints all bloody,
And my cup, a King's jewel, royal, radiant and ruddy,
With Thy presence will glow as an infinite shrine.

Thy sacrifice offer; in the world's early morning
The choice of their flocks was by patriarchs slain,
And when the Wise King was His temple adorning,
The blood of His hecatombs poured forth like rain.
O Lord of the altar and temple! in vain
Have I sought to acquit me—with sorrow and pain;—
The sacrifice Thou, offered once and forever,
The Cross was Thine altar; our God was the giver;
Our faith is that risen, Thou'lt pardon and reign.

HEAVEN'S HOSTAGE.

I.

Jerusalem the golden,
  Thy glories I shall see,
As in the story olden
  They are revealed to me;
And, through the gloom appalling
  That shrouds the thorny way,
The light of Heaven falling
  Will lead to perfect day!

II.

Jerusalem the golden,
  Thy King hath wondrous art,
Our spirits to embolden
  And lift each sinking heart!
His angel claims the choicest,
  The firstling of each flock,
In whom thou most rejoicest,
  O soul that bears the shock!

III.

He hath an hostage taken
  To lure us to His feet;
We are not all-forsaken,
  Since there we soon shall meet
Him in his youth and beauty,
  O noble, white, young soul,
That trod the path of duty
  And righteous self-control.

IV.

Jerusalem the golden,
  Unto thy happy shore,
Where dwell the saints enfolden
  In God's love evermore,
We follow, faint and pleading,
  The way our dear one trod,
To Jesus interceding
  Beside the throne of God.

THE PERFECT REST.

My Lord, the universe is Thine,
From which Thou canst bestow
Power and majesty and might
Infinity of strength and sight
Equal to what we deem divine;
To see beyond the realms of light,
To hear the harmonies that flow
From constellations in their flight,
To feel with angels and to know
In our own hearts the heavenly glow
Of seraphim, who 'round the throne
Thy glories in their praises own.
But, Lord, be mine to lean my head,
Like John, upon my Savior's breast,
And there in trust, devoid of dread,
To feel His holy influence shed,
And find in Him the perfect rest.

THE END.

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